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Techniques and practical suggestions related to modern methods of modern language instruction are given. The modern method to foreign language teaching is based on the premise that foreign language should be taught as a native one is learned, through a progression from listening and imitation to conversation, to reading, and then to writing. Language should not be considered an exercise in problem solving; rather it should be concerned with the formation and performance of habits.

A class is a session in which books are not used and detailed explanations of structure are avoided. All sentences are modeled by the teacher in correct speech patterns. While practicing the target language, the students never use English, and English is seldom used by the teacher. After the students have been saturated with the sound and feel of the language, and have a firm foundation of basic vocabulary, they may then proceed to the structural phase of the language. Under this system, students advance by levels (rather than grades) of structured and sequential language experiences that require mastery of basic prescribed materials and skills.

The dialog is a valuable technique fo introducing new material. The students can learn meaningful content material which will serve as a basis for vocabulary and structure drills.

There are a variety of practice drills, and they should be conducted in choral response until the teacher feels that an automatic response has been set up in the mind of each student.

The language laboratory is an essential part of the audiolingual method. A language laboratory should be directed by a responsible person who supervises the activities of both learners and machines.

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INSTRUCTIONAL TECHNOLOGY - U.S.C.

MODERN METHODS FOR MODERN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

by

B. G. Lauda, Principal

Peters Township Junior-Senior High School

McMurray, Pa.

and

Joanna Fastuca, Chairman Foreign Language Department

Peters Township Junior-Senior High School

McMurray, Pa.

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MODERN METHODS FOR MODERN LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

The modern approach to foreign language teaching is based on a simple premise: foreign language should be taught as a native one is learned, through a progression from listening and imitation to conversation, from this to reading and thence, finally, to writing. The pattern which such a learning experience follows is fairly rigid since it is determined by the natural development of speech habits. Nelson Brooks summarized this pattern as follows:[1]

> [The learner] is to hear only authentic foreign speech, he is to speak only on the basis of what he has heard, he is to read only what he has spoken, he is to write only what he has read, and he is to analyze, if he does so at all, only what he has heard, spoken, read, written and learned.

The major point is that language learning should not be considered an exercise in problem solving; rather it should be concerned with the formation and performance of habits. In this situation the teacher's function is to aid in the formation of these habits. This is a new role for the language teacher, one which calls for a variety of skills and techniques. The purpose of this report is to discuss these techniques and to offer some practical suggestions on how to make them work.

AUDIO-LINGUAL METHOD: SOME BASIC STRUCTURES

A class is a drill session in which books are not used and detailed explanations of structure are avoided. Furthermore, all sentences are modeled by the teacher in correct speech patterns. While practicing the target language, the students never use English and English is seldom used by the teacher. If English is spoken at all,

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[1]Nelson Brooks, Language and Language Learning, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1960), p. 39

it is used at the close of the class period to make explanations and to clear up misunderstandings.

In the beginning, oral discrimination and imitation are practiced without the students seeing the written word. After the students have thoroughly learned the material through oral recitation, written material is introduced, but only for the sounds which have been practiced and mastered. The students learn structure through the practice of patterns which emphasize pronunciation and word order. These practice patterns minimize the vocabulary used until the students have learned common structures.

Some common rules for success in the audio-lingual approach require students to:

1. Study vocabulary only in context.
2. Maintain a level of practice in which the language is formed in a speaker-hearer situation.
3. Avoid translation until an advanced level.

LEVELS

Under this system students advance by levels rather than grades. Levels are structured and sequential language experiences requiring mastery of basic prescribed materials and skills. If the language program begins in the elementary school, level I may include grades 3 through 6, level II grades 7 and 8, level III grade 9, level IV grade 10, level V grade 11, and level VI grade 12. If the language program begins in the junior high school, level I may include grades 7 and 8, level II grade 9, level III grade 10, level IV grade 12.

The following percentages are offered as a guide to the amount of time that should be spent on each skill on each level of learning.

Level I - Listening 50%, Speaking 30%, Reading 15%, Writing 5%

Level II - Listening 30%, Speaking 20%, Reading 40%, Writing 10%

Level III - Listening 20%, Speaking 20%, Reading 40%, Writing 20%

Level IV - Listening 10%, Speaking 25%, Reading 40%, Writing 25%

Level V - is considered an Advanced Placement Program in which able students may enter a college-level course while still in high school. These students may upon completion of the course take examinations given by the College Entrance Examination Board and be granted college credit.

USE OF THE DIALOG

The dialog is a valuable technique for introducing new material. In this way, the students learn meaningful content material which will serve as a basis for vocabulary and structure drills. Through the use of a dialog, vocabulary is learned in context and translation can be avoided. The earliest dialogs should be ones in which students learn to address each other in normal speech patterns that require a variety of tenses and a rapid change from singular to plural. To emphasize meaning, these dialogs should be presented twice in English and accompanied by visual aids. Then the dialog should be repeated twice in the target language using the same visual aids to allow students to recognize familiar areas. Following mastery of the given dialog the students may be introduced to additional vocabulary such as numbers, days of the week, colors, time, months of the year, seasons, etc., which is closely related to the subject content of the dialog. Only one new learning experience should be introduced each day.

USE OF PRACTICE DRILLS

There are a variety of pattern practice drills. A few examples and definitions

follow:

1. Repetition: The student is required to repeat an utterance aloud immediately after hearing it modeled by the teacher. The sentence should be brief enough for easy retention.

   Ex. Teacher: Mary is tall. The student repeats: Mary is tall.

2. Substitution: When a cue is given which is to be substituted in a certain slot in a frame.

   Teacher: Mary is tall. Cue: John John is tall.

3. Replacement: Cue words are given to replace the various slots in the frames.

   Teacher: Mary is tall. (short) Student: Mary is short

   Teacher: (was) Student: Mary was short

   Teacher: (John) Student: John was short

4. Rejoinder: Student is required to respond with a given answer.

   Teacher: What is your name? Student: My name is John

5. Directed conversation: Students are instructed to address someone else.

   Teacher: John, ask Mary where she is going.

   John: Mary, where are you going?

6. Response drill: Student is to select one of two suggested answers.

   Teacher: Is the book red or blue?

   Student: The book is blue.

These drills should be conducted in choral response until the teacher feels that an automatic response has been set up in the mind of each student. Then individual response may be required.

Here are some hints on conducting choral response.

1. The teacher should model the word, phrase or sentence and also the required student response. Begin with short sequences, and proceed to full statements.
2. The teacher should use her hands to indicate when the students are to perform.
3. The teacher should make sure to keep the responses lively, avoiding monotone and dragging tempo.
4. The teacher should make certain that all details of intonation, loudness, pause, and change of pitch are imitated by the student.
5. The teacher should give the appropriate response immediately following the students' performance to allow them to determine the correctness or incorrectness of their response.

Once committed to the audio-lingual approach to language instruction, it is of the greatest importance to emphasize the spoken word in the initial level for the first two or three months. The time span may vary depending upon the students' progress. The students may then be introduced to reading, but only for material already learned in speaking exercises. Writing follows reading. Throughout the early levels, reading and writing should continue to lag behind hearing and speaking.

A typical day in a language class begins with the presentation of new material. This is best taught when the students are not tired from practice. The new lesson is followed by review of the previous day's lesson and oral or written quiz material.

THE LANGUAGE LABORATORY

The language laboratory is an essential part of the audio-lingual method.

The immediate benefits from the use of this electronic equipment are:

1. Machines can repeat identical material without fatigue or irritation.
2. Machines can record the student's response allowing him to compare his response with the original.
3. Students may practice on their own in the laboratory without fear of errors.
4. Native speakers may be heard by the students.
5. Rate of natural speech is emphasized.
6. Inhibitions are broken down.

In addition to these important benefits, the language laboratory presents certain problems for the teacher and administrator. These include the type and amount of equipment, scheduling, program material, and laboratory supervision.

EQUIPMENT - In general the essential equipment for a laboratory includes tape recorders, earphones, microphones, and positions at which the students may work. The laboratory should provide for the largest number of students a class is likely to contain -- plus three booths. Extra booths will provide spare stations in case of a breakdown of equipment. For the convenience of teachers, for efficiency of operation and for adequate supervision, the laboratory should be situated close to the regular language classrooms, and should not be used as a regular classroom.

As with any electronic or mechanical equipment, the language laboratory requires occasional maintenance and service. Earphones may need repairing, components may burn out, tape decks may need overhauling. You may enlist the help of amateur student repairmen or call upon professional help. It is best, however, to arrange for a sound maintenance program with trained technicians.

Once the laboratory is installed, the expense of upkeep begins. Master tapes must

be purchased, blank tapes are essential, bulk erasers are useful, cleaning fluid for recording heads, splicing tape, leader tape, and a splicer are all necessary for a smooth running operation. All of this material requires storage space. Therefore, shelving for filing of tapes and for other equipment is necessary.

SCHEDULING - In scheduling, the ideal situation permits each class to spend fifteen minutes a day in the language laboratory. However, if this is not possible, a minimum of two - fifteen minute periods a week is acceptable.

Every minute of the time spent in the laboratory should be used effectively. Ideally, students should speak the foreign language half of the time and listen to it the other half. It is most desirable to use pre-recorded program tapes during the laboratory period. This requires language teachers to have non-teaching time available in their weekly schedule for preparation of needed laboratory materials.

TAPES - What should be included on a program tape? The language laboratory is most useful if the program scheduled is fully integrated with work in the classroom. Script and tapes should contain practice on the same structural and content materials that are being studied in class. This integration works best when new materials are first presented in the classroom, then practiced and learned in the laboratory, and finally reintroduced into the class program, where they can be given the full dimension of communication. Program tapes, therefore, should include music, the current dialog being studied, and the structure drills which have been practiced in class. The music at the beginning of a tape allows the students to adjust the earphones and volume. It also gives the teacher and students the opportunity to find any defects in the equipment without the student missing any of the taped lesson.

If commercially prepared tapes are purchased, it is always best to copy the original and store it for safe keeping. Should the copy be accidentally erased, another copy can then be made from the original. Some companies have a loan system which permits tapes to be rented and copied. Of course, before copying any tape approval from the manufacturer must be obtained.

All tapes in the laboratory should be clearly marked on the outside of the box, on the leader tape, and on the reel itself. Just as books are accessioned in a library, a code system should be used for the filing of tapes in the language laboratory.

SUPERVISION AND THE USE OF STUDENT ASSISTANTS - A language laboratory should be consistently supervised by a responsible person who can keep a watchful eye on the activities of both learners and machines.

Some schools have successfully used a system of student laboratory assistants who are responsible for having the tapes on the tape decks when the teacher comes into the laboratory. The assistants help the teacher with any problem that may arise during the laboratory period. When the teacher and class leave, the assistant removes the tape and files it properly, then prepares for the next teacher's laboratory period. The laboratory assistants can also be trained to dub tapes for class use and to set up tapes for students who may come from a study hall to receive extra practice. A number of schools have found the student assistant system to be a great aid to the teachers, and the students are delighted with the responsibility.

Finally there is the problem of students misusing the equipment. Students should be taught the proper use of the equipment on their first visit to the laboratory. One effective way of keeping damage down is to request students to report any misuse

by previous occupants of the booth. Doing this serves a double purpose; it helps teachers pinpoint responsibility for equipment damage, and it brings to light at once sources of potential equipment failure.

SUMMARY

What benefits do the students reap from the audio-lingual approach to language teaching? It is quite obvious that the emphasis on the verbal phase of the language provides the students with a more realistic foundation in a language that was primarily intended for oral communication between people. As children, our first contact with our native language was verbal. With the passing of time we were required to study the structure of our native language. A similar procedure is followed in this method of learning a foreign language. After the students have been saturated with the sound and feel of the language, and have a firm foundation on basic vocabulary, they may then proceed to the structural phase of the language. Did language students under the old grammar approach to teaching vocalize the language as consistantly as they now do with the audio-lingual method? What better way is there to learn to speak a language than to be required to vocalize it fifty percent of the class time? Everyone, fast-learner and slow-learner alike, uses the language. And is there any doubt that the fast-learner will deduce basic grammatical rules from the drills he is repeating? The slow-learning student has the satisfaction of having a command of certain basic sentences. He will later have the enlightening experience of understanding the structural basis for what he has been saying as he proceeds in each level.

During laboratory sessions, students receive further reinforcement in the basic sentences they have studied with their teacher in class. They have already heard

and seen the words pronounced by their teacher and now in the laboratory they are given the opportunity to perfect their pronunciation and comprehension. They will want to imitate and receive the same degree of accuracy that they hear from the native speaker of the language they are trying to master; furthermore, they are shielded from embarrassment in the security of the booths as they practice for mastery of the material.

Yes, the language teacher has been faced with a great change in methodology and has been summoned to the added chore of preparing a well integrated laboratory program each day, but which of us would refuse the challenge and turn away from the responsibility?